OCCUPY SYDNEY

Zine

Articles by Occupiers

Original Content

Articles by Sydney Occupiers

Occupy Sydney backs a Call for a Worldwide General Strike on May 1st.

From the Occupy Sydney website
http://www.occupysydney.org.au
By Liam Kesteven

On February the 18th The General Assembly of Occupy Sydney endorsed a call for a Worldwide General Strike on May 1st.

This Strike is being organised in unison with other Occupies around the World, including Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Los Angeles & Occupy Oakland.

This will not just be a Call to No Work on May 1st but also No School, No Housework, No Shopping & No Banking.

As Recent Job Cuts in the Financial Sector of Australia have shown the 1% continue to enjoy increasing profits and bonuses while sacking and outsourcing Australian Jobs and also not passing on Interest Rate Cuts to Hard Working Australians.

Why work to make the corporations richer? The only power we have is the withdrawal of our labour. Strike for control over our own lives.

Recently on February 28th Eleven Major Trade Unions in India organised a One-Day Strike Involving Millions of Workers in defence of public ownership and for stronger labour rights. ***GreenLeft Article***

http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/50246

Occupy Sydney will be organising for May 1st with Unions and other Groups.

Video from Occupy Sydney Media Youtube *Channel*

http://www.youtube.com/occupysydneymedia

Occupy sydney podcast 001 - may day general strike by *Occupysydney* on *Mixcloud*

Occupy May 1st *Website* http://www.occupymay1st.org/

Thinking of Staying?

Submitted by Rohan Best

An Occupier's Guide to staying in Martin Place

Staying in Martin Place at night can be a challenging but rewarding experience. The physical layout creates a strong wind tunnel which means it's always colder at the OS site than in other places in the city.

Especially now that it's coming into winter, bring your scarves, gloves, beanies, coats and wear lots of layers! Five small layers will be warmer than one big coat. There are limited amounts of spare blankets, mats and other sleeping gear but if possible, it's always best to bring your own in case OS gear is wet or being used.

You should also bring waterproof clothes and umbrellas – Sydney seems to be constantly wet these days so as a rule of thumb, just expect it to rain.

Occupy Checklist

* sleeping bag
* sleeping mat
* waterproof clothes
* book to read
* phone/camera
* lots of layers!

A camera or a phone that can record is another essential item! You have a right to record in public spaces and this is one of the best defence mechanisms against unlawful police acts.

Unfortunately, the police and random drunks mean that sleeping on the streets can never be 100% safe. There is, however, safety in numbers and part of the occupy ethos is community and support. Remember, if you ever feel uncomfortable, tell someone: we're all in this together as a strong and supportive community!

NSW POLICE' THEATRE OF CRUELTY

On Sunday the 1st of April a group of Sydney-based anarchists and some members of the Occupy Sydney protest staged a brief protest at Darling Harbour where an expo celebrating the 150th anniversary of the NSW Police was being held. The expo, which went from 10am to 4pm, featured a number of demonstrations by the police. These were aimed at entertaining the public, who drifted in and out of the expo, while familiarising them with police activities in an enjoyable way. The activists arrived during the demonstration of the public order and riot squad. We hung banners, one saying "Disarm the cops" over the fence of the grassed area where the demo was taking place, in good view of the audience. Several people heckled us, telling us to "Get jobs", and one man who may have been an undercover cop tried to take one of the banners but was resisted. We managed to hang the banners for most of the demo, while shouting criticism of the demo and of police brutality and aggression. Afterwards we were followed out of the expo by two police officers and told not to "try anything else", but nothing further.

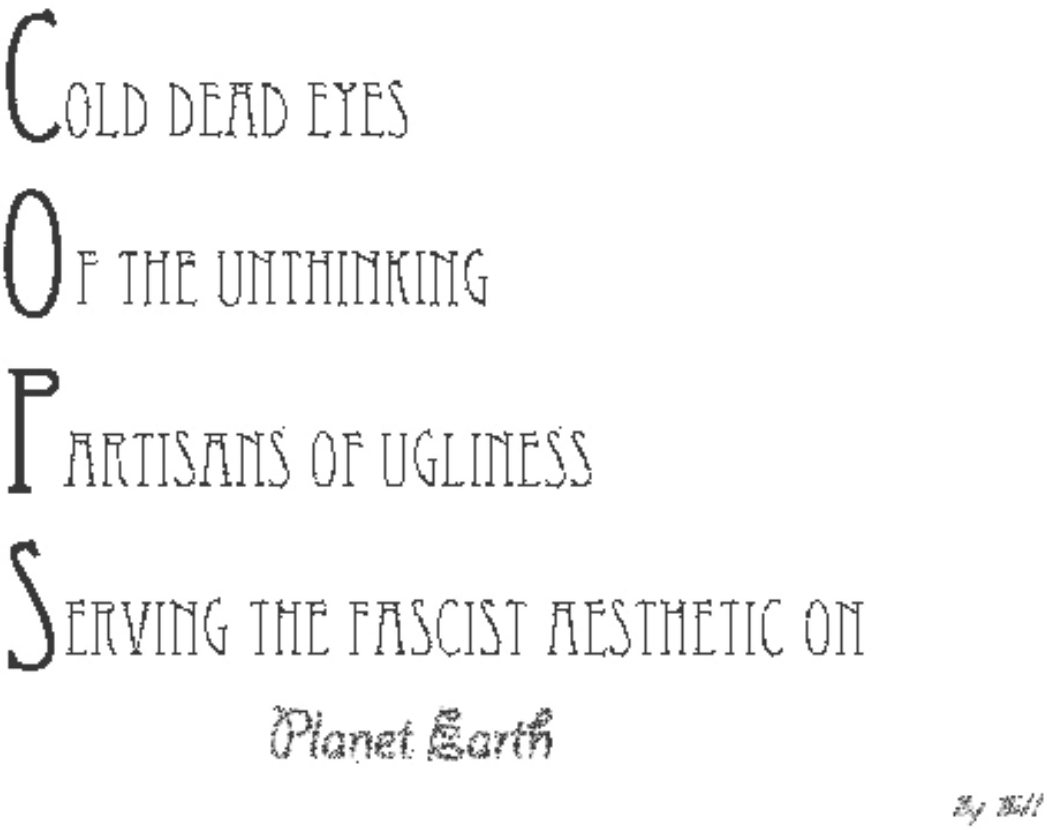
The demo was a theatrical simulation of a riot or protest, with police officers dressed in plain clothes acting as the rioters/protestors and shouting and hurling fake bricks and other objects at the riot squad, who moved in with riot shields and batons to "break them up". They moved around the large grass area, repeating the simple stage directions – Protestors throw objects. Riot police move in – over and over. At one point the "protestors" curiously began clapping their bricks, perhaps in simulation of protestors playing drums and music at rallies?

The nature of these demonstrations was particularly interesting and shocking, and what is described above was indicative of the general tone of the expo. The dog show, earlier in the day, featured police dog, Chuck, a German Shepard, in a simulated robbery, with a police officer "disguised" as an "old lady". The "old lady", apparently confused, wandered into the middle of the grassed area to be accosted by a "robber" who ran out onto the field and snatched the handbag off her. Chuck was then quickly brought into the arena and released. He ran and latched onto the robber's arm (which was of course fitted with a protective case). All the demos were received with rounds of applause.

The police had recruitment tents sent up, where people were given police merchandise bags, a police helicopter, and PCYC vans with video-game stations fitted inside for kids to play on. People were able to "mingle" with police in a relaxed and informal atmosphere, and have their photos taken with police standing by their white custom-motorbikes dressed in regalia. At one point we saw a man in a wheelchair having his photo taken while a police officer handcuffed him. The police recruitment posters featured jokes, with a photo of police utility belts and a caption saying "Great fashion accessories".

The expo was designed to make the police force and their activities of discipline and punishment seem benign and non-confronting. Even the simulation of a riot squad breaking up protestors can be a light-hearted spectacle to be enjoyed by parents and their children.

The whole show was particularly distasteful in light of its taking place barely one week after the killing of Brazilian student Roberto Ladisio in Sydney, brutally tasered by police after being suspected of stealing a packet of biscuits from 7-11 and subsequently tracked by the use CCTV.



By portraying protesters as inherently armed and dangerous, with no other purpose than throwing bricks at the police, the propaganda-piece aimed to link protest with criminality. But what were they re-enacting through this elaborate mise en scène : London riots? the Arab spring? Madrid ? Occupy Wall Street? Students in South America? Within the context of another looming GFC (countries going bankrupt, people losing their jobs, their homes and generally their hope) it was an outrageous demonstration of ignorance, or a deliberate distortion, showing a lack of perspective as to recent global events and the real reasons behind people getting out into the streets despite being faced with violent state repression. Clearly the Riot Police's purpose to their fool's day show was to promote the efficiency and readiness of the force in the event of Australian people eventually exercising their right to protest and fighting for freedom like the rest of the world.

Submitted by Maloë Cadic

How The Police Subvert The Judiciary

by Rohan Best

In its six month existence, Occupy Sydney has had many encounters with the NSW Police which has resulted in almost 100 fines and arrests. Many of these fines and arrests have been for 'contravening council notices' i.e. for camping or staying overnight.

The Police have a level of discretion when enforcing the laws created by the State. They can issue a warning, an infringement notice, a court attendance notice or, in more severe cases, they may make an arrest. What laws are broken, how or under what circumstances these laws are broken and who the offender is (age, previous convictions etc) will determine what action the police deem to be appropriate when dealing with offences.

'Contravening council notices' is a minor offence and only warrants a court attendance notice or an on-the-spot fine of $110. To put things in perspective, littering with a lit cigarette butt incurs a greater fine of $200. Despite the trivial nature of 'camping' and 'staying overnight' offences, the NSW Police have made multiple *arrests* against occupiers for alleged breaches. By meting out a more severe form of policing than would normally occur just because Occupy Sydney is a political movement is a blatantly political act and goes against the supposedly neutral, unbiased and apolitical nature of the Police as an institution.

After making an arrest, the Police may impose bail conditions, the only purpose of which is to ensure that the accused attends court. The accused may refuse to sign these conditions in which case they must remain in police custody until they are next able to see a magistrate (and it is worth noting that courts have weekends and holiday periods whereas prisons do not). Should this occur, the Police will make their case for issuing bail conditions and the magistrate will decide whether to accept the bail conditions set by the Police, amend the bail conditions or remove them entirely. This is a crucial point as the Judiciary ultimately decides what penalties should be administered if at all. Furthermore, the Judiciary is independent of the Police which acts as a safeguard against political persecution, Police corruption and brutality.

In all cases when occupiers have been arrested, even when the arrest has been in response to an incident away from Martin Place or the Occupy Sydney site, the Police have imposed bail conditions which restrict the accused from returning to Martin Place. Such bail conditions have nothing to do with ensuring that the accused attends court. The bail conditions are punitive in nature and

effectively prohibit occupiers from protesting with others at the Occupy Sydney site. This is a direct form of political oppression.

Many occupiers that have been arrested have refused to sign the bail conditions set by the Police and have spent the night or an extended period of time in incarceration in order to be able to return to Martin Place. This is a brave and highly commendable act of resistance to Police intimidation and those who have chosen to stand up for their rights and political beliefs should be recognised and praised for their efforts.

Photo Submitted by Rohan Best

When brought before a magistrate, the vast majority of bail conditions imposed by the Police have either been amended to allow the accused free access to Martin Place or have been dismissed entirely. Similarly, no conviction has yet been made against occupiers for 'contravening council notices' when the matter has been brought before a court of law.

Regardless of Occupy Sydney's successes in court, those accused have still been *punished* directly by the Police before matters are heard by the Judiciary. These punishments include being locked up for an extended period of time, facing Police harassment and intimidation (including the use of sexist and other derogatory remarks) and having to face court costs and take days off work in order to defend themselves in court.

By using bail conditions as a punishment and by depriving occupiers of their civil liberties through incarceration when punitive and outrageous bail conditions are not signed, the NSW Police are subverting the Judiciary and acting as Judge, Jury and Executioner.

My Review of Sydney City Talks "Poverty amongst Plenty" Forum

From Lost in the Din
http://lostinthedin.wordpress.com
By Liam Kesteven

Photo Submitted by Liam Kesteven

Well the City Talks was pretty much what we expected, a forum set-up by Sydney City Council and despite what we where told that four speakers would each get 20 minutes each to speak including our Marc Ahrens and then there would be a general discussion and then perhaps a Q&A session from the audience. Well we got 20 minutes from Clover Moore (Mayor of Sydney) going on about her supposed green credentials and her schemes for dealing with homelessness in Sydney, these have failed despite spending millions homelessness has increased and seem to be a method to convert public money and land into private hands.

Clover Moore originally opposed a proposal by Irene Doutney and others of the Greens Party on Sydney County Council back in late 2011 to give Occupy Sydney a safe space to Occupy and this City Talk was her counter proposal, a 90 minute talk to solve the world's problems in! Also Occupy Sydney didn't get an invite to the talk until Irene got on the case and invited us to join in two weeks before hand.

Some Occupiers Mic Checked at the beginning of Clover Moore's speech (overdue) and interrupted it for a few minutes, unfortunately we underestimated the amount of people it would take to successfully Mic Check such a large space. I guess we can put it down to experience, it didn't go down with the middle class audience to well, i think they expected more of a comedy show (which it was in a way) and a bunch of feel good crap which they definitely got. The Mic Checkers were asked to leave by three burly Security Guards and the patronising presenter tried to make light of it.

We then got a talk from Paul Gilding who made some good points but didn't go far enough in my opinion, pulled his punches in some respects and made light of other issues.

Apart from Marc, Paul & Clover on the forum we also had,

Sam Mclean, Deputy National Director, Getup!

Ben Waters, Director, Ecomagination GE (General Electric) Australia & NZ.

Rachel Botswan, Social Innovator & Author.

Ross Gittins AM, Economics Editor, The Sydney Morning Herald.

Adam Spencer, Presenter & Facilitator.

I got the impression from some of the speakers like Rachel Botswan & Ben Waters that band-aid solutions was all we needed to do and to throw money and technology at the issues, this is without a deeper more fundamental understanding of the underlying issues and look at alternatives which put environmental and people as the primary concern than the present concern of we make our money and maintain our power/monopoly first and then whatever crumbs are left on the table we give to the 99%.

I like to use the Analogy of Capitalism as a two hundred year old Zombie like Corpse which needs constant transfusions of blood (Bailouts) from the Public to keep it barely alive meanwhile the more healthy people of the world go without the blood they need to stay alive while massive amounts are

needed to keep this Zombie Corpse of Capitalism alive. In a Michael Moore interview he makes the analogy that modern day capitalism is like an organ of a body which has become dangerously cancerous and is effecting the health of the whole body and the only way to deal with is to cut it out!

Rachel Botswan talked about these schemes in England designed to deal with the poverty there which sounded good to the casual listener but as someone who lived in england during the first 6 years of Thatcher I know what it's like to see your family struggle on a council estate and these conservatives in now are just Neo-Thatcherites completing what she started 33 years ago, the continued destruction of unions which are one of the few democratising forces left in western society, cut backs on social services which will create more poverty for those already on the edges of UK society meanwhile giving Billions to the Bankers in London's Financial District AKA "The City". Not mention the further privatisation of public services like the NHS which Thatcher tried and failed to do.

Ben Waters of GE (General Electric) was the Green Face of a huge Multi-National Corporation, designed to make us think this huge company really cares about the environment and sustainability. For those who don't know GE is a huge Military Contractor best known for making Jet Engines for use in Military & Civilian Aircraft so they have a huge investment in our present fossil fuel based economy and large Military Forces being deployed around the world to protect American "Interests". He stated that GE welcomes regulations from governments to control their operations (I almost gagged) and almost felt like Mic Checking the fact that in 2010 GE made $400 Million dollars in America and paid ZERO tax on it! not only that they also got a $3.2 Billion Tax Refund from the Government that year! I sensed a slight tremble in his voice, i think he felt a somewhat hostile audience and Sam Mclean from Getup did have a dig at him toward the end of the talk.

Marc Ahrens from Occupy Sydney made the point that there are deeper issues not being addressed here and that making money should not be the primary or one of the major motivators for a healthy and sane society, Adam Spencer made the point that these questions could not be answered in a 90 minutes forum which is totally correct, this is one of the major goals of Occupy to create and maintain a space for conversation and debate about how a sustainable and sane society might function in a world where resources are going to have to go further and environmental damage has to be reversed, among many other un-addressed issues which the mainstream seems unwilling or incapable of bringing to light.

I think this night highlighted one issue we in Occupy Australia haven't really discussed and will need to address if we really want to represent the 99%. How do we as a movement reach out to the Middle Classes ? Issues such as high rents & mortgages are good starting points but in my experience many of the middle class feel that generally capitalism works and despite its flaws which many of them are aware of they still generally believe in it.

It's all they have known for all their lives and they still believe they can join the ranks of the 1% and live like they do (or at least close to it) To be told you have to live on less is not popular but if it's made in the context of eco-systems on the verge of collapse at least some will accept it, the rest will be forced to after the collapse comes and everyone has to adapt.

Apart from Paul and Clover no one else on the panel got to speak alone for 20 minutes, also no question time was given to the audience which further reinforces the one-way top-down nature of this City Talk, also no one from the general public was allowed to sit in the front four rows as these seats where all reserved for the Sydney City County Council, another example of the Elitist nature of this forum.

At the end we had a feel good Choir sing Gospel and tried to get the audience involved, I felt like we were in some Mid Western American Mega Church! I managed to avoid walking out until almost the end of that Cringe worthy spectacle.

After the Talk some Occupiers gathered in the side street next to City Recital Hall and had a Free School on subjects such as Homelessness & Radical Sustainability, also a Report Back was heard from Marc.

Meditating at a riot

by Pathi

¨Can you visualise a riot in order to meditate?¨ My friend Gemma asked. I paused and thought of a response. Meditation is normally not so vocal. ¨And why would you visualise that?¨ We both smiled and shifted postures and tried to understand why a riot is any use at all. David, who sat looking out the window, observed, ¨a riot can be very cathartic!¨ It was like a gong had rung but it might have been Gemma because I looked her funnily as she quizzed, ¨and what does cathartic mean?¨

Catharsis is a purging of emotion. On the stage, it´s the act of experiencing heightened emotion. Once we experience emotion cathartically, it´s thought, that emotion leaves us. Or at the least, that emotion isn´t the same for us anymore, and while we may not have reached a resolution about the emotion and its meanings, we may well find we see ourselves differently. It´s something to build upon: this is all too powerful.

Gemma smiled off into the distance and I thought for a moment there was something out the window because both David and her were gazing. I looked along with them and it seemed we´d forgotten what we were talking about and what we were doing. But of course, then Gemma closed her eyes and David and I watched her. ¨What are you doing?¨ We asked. ¨I´m trying to find myself a riot.¨

Riots are touchy subjects. There´s confrontation and emotion and while you could get over what happens to the odd material object, you never quite know how you´ll feel about what you do and how you do it. You don´t know if you´ll find any control in a riot. And if you do find control, you don´t really know if everybody else has it. But then, perhaps I´m missing the point. Maybe it´s not about control.

I give Gemma a jab. She opens her eyes and gives me a jab. I´m almost sure she was at least near a riot. ¨Any luck?¨ She nods and then adds, ¨I felt lost for a moment. I got to a point where I didn´t know anymore. But it was right. Being with those people was right. It wasn´t like TV.¨ Gemma´s weird, I think; No riot could be like TV. I frowned and impulsively concluded: meditation doesn´t seem so combative. Yet any self possession is resistive, so why can´t meditation be part of revolutionary social theatre?

Visualising an image is to give all your energies to that image. It´s to show to yourself that right now, right here, this is important and only this. But we don´t leave the world behind and we don´t have to ignore the world while we meditate. It might be very radical, but why not send those who meditate to the front line to stir up some action? They´d definitely qualify as visionaries, though obviously of a different nature.

I felt that Gemma had stirred a note that wouldn´t go away. As the faintest

sounds that linger on for much longer than you´re ever willing to admit, I thought about riots and thought it too could help anybody become a better person, a better revolutionary. So I decided to sit down and meditate. The task was to visualise a riot and allow my emotions to synthesise in them. These are the words which led me to glory:

Photo Submitted by Bern Ellis

There´s a crowd of people jostling. Can you feel it heaving? They touch your shoulders. You´re hugging; linking arms. There are many colours and different types of clothing. You see all your favourite ones. You´re eyes focus onto a sign somewhere before you. You look at the hands and the way they grip the sign. What´s written? Repeat the messages to yourself by reading them over? Are you reading them?

Something rises into the air. What is it? Does it move in a particular direction? There are many emotions arising. It´s exciting. You walk towards the centre of it. You feel yourself sway in and out of the crowd, feeling your shoulders move side to side, then your hips. Your walking and moving is absorbing but then it stops. Ahead, you hear a sound.

The sound is of a horn. It comes from some blurry point in front of you and flies past. You catch it in one ear. Which ear? In the opposite ear you hear somebody repeating a slogan. You know it because you´ve heard it often. You can feel your lips moving and you know you´re repeating it.

But a moment has come when the air becomes thicker. You know this had to happen. It is like smoke or something oppressive that you would have felt. A blanket, a chain, an order. People are moving and you feel disorientated as though you´ve spun around like a child. The road is empty now. Before you there is an empty car moving onto the centre of the road. The roof is on flames. The flames are absorbing. You only watch them. Slowly everything else blackens out and your eyes feel the pressure. These are tears. It may be the smoke or it may be the flames but they´re on your face. Still, you look at the flames. People in uniform come to push the car away. They have a hose and they extinguish the flame. But you hold onto the flame. Because you´re there. The car´s moving away. You don´t need it anymore: you´re right there looking at the flames.

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COCA: The NSW Reichstag Fire Decree

"Right now your government is doing things you think only other governments do."

-- Anonymous

"The spectre of a police state lurks here… This is especially a time for vigilance in NSW. Someone once described it as the price of liberty."

-- Nicholas Cowdery AM QC, Former NSW DPP

"These laws strip away fundamental legal rights such as freedom of association, the presumption of innocence, open court hearings and the right of appeal. Then they can be used against any group or individual."

-- Ferret, Sergeant-at-Arms Finks MC & UMCA Spokesperson

Some have accused Occupy Sydney of being radical, but the ironic fact is that the most radical departures from the rule of law are happening right now, in the form of new laws passed by the government; laws blindly supported by both major political parties.

The Criminal Organisation Control Act 2012 (COCA) is rehashed from the 2009 bill of the same name, which along with the amendments to the Crimes act (Consorting and Organised Crime), have been framed as the "bike laws" by politicians and the media. I urge you to read the full contents of these bills to verify that what is written in this article – don't take the word of the bikies, or the NSW law society or the NSW bar association or the former NSW DPP or any of the many other people who have spoken out against these laws; read COCA -

http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/nswbills.nsf/0/E7BA39781A9AE669CA2579A400147924 and the amendments to the crimes act (Consorting and Organised Crime);

http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/nswbills.nsf/6355a6928b367630ca256e6700008afa/78ba9fab337ef090ca2579a400142147?OpenDocument

COCA will give an unelected official, the NSW Police Commissioner, unprecedented power to declare a group of three or more people to be a criminal organisation. Once a group has been declared criminal, innocent people can face severe penalties of between 3-15 years imprisonment for associating, participating or consorting with members of that group. Consorting can include anything from connecting on facebook, twitter or even just sending SMS.

The test of what constitutes a criminal organisation is determined on a balance of probabilities, potentially in secret, without the accused party necessarily being present or hearing the evidence against them. An "organisation" can include almost anything. Members can be from interstate or overseas. The group does not need to be based in NSW. A person can be considered a member of a group, even if they don't identify themselves as belonging to the group or have any official membership status.

Nowhere in the act are bikies or motorcycle clubs ever mentioned. This is not a select law for a select few; it can be applied at the whim of the Police Commissioner to any group or individual. Nowhere in the act is it necessary for rulings or applications to be made open and public to the extent they have been

publicized and talked about in the case of the bikies. The register of declared criminal organisations may, at the whim of the Police Commissioner, be kept secret from the public. The secret evidence presented in the application, can also be kept secret – even if the ruling Judge finds no reason for the evidence to be secret. If the lawmakers are satisfied that these new laws are right and just, why did they feel it necessary to include an immunity clause that absolves them from any criminal or civil liability?

Many of us at Occupy, still have these old-fashioned ideas about the right to a fair and open trial, the right to the presumption of innocence and natural justice. Many of us still hold onto an old-fashioned idea that a criminal is a person who has been found guilty of committing a crime, and that a crime is something that harms others.

Many of us still hold onto an old-fashioned idea that the deprivation of liberty is sufficient punishment and that permanently cutting off convicted criminals from their friends and family after they have served their gaol sentence, and to exclude those people from working in fourteen different industries, would be punishment of a cruel and unusual sort to both the convicted person and their friends, family and other members of the community who are innocent. But this cruel punishment is not limited to convicted criminals; members of declared organizations, those who have not been convicted of any crime, will also be punished in the same way - as will their friends and family or anyone in the community who engages with them.

When David Clarke MLC introduced the amendments to "modernize the offence of consorting", he gave the example of a locksmith who changes the locks for a declared group – that the locksmith will now be committing an offence. The legislation is such, that the locksmith can be guilty even if he does not know that the group has been declared criminal, and even if he diligently attempts to do a check on each and every person he is called to change locks for; it can be practicably impossible for him to find out. That doesn't matter, he can still be found guilty of an offence – and would, in effect, loose his license to be a locksmith forever more. This absurd scenario is clearly an affront to justice, yet this is the scenario proposed by David Clark MLC when he commended the bill to the house.

COCA and the consorting amendments are such badly written laws that one must wonder if a police state will be brought about through conspiracy or blunder. These laws are unjust, unfair and unnecessary. Fortunately, they are so badly conceived, so clearly unconstitutional, they are unlikely to survive a high court challenge and should be defeated just as the 2009 bill was defeated. While politicians spout Orwellian rhetoric and beat their chests – the ultimate cost of these laws will most probably be in the millions of dollars of legal fees and other resources wasted unnecessarily; money and resources that could be put to far better use. That would be the best outcome, but it may well be worse. A precedent could, in effect, legitimise COCA and the consorting laws.

Over the past 6 months at Occupy Sydney we have seen police use violence and intimidation to break up our peaceful protest. (Has the violence been as severe as in some countries? Of course not, but that shouldn't make it acceptable)

This is not a matter of conjecture or opinion; the facts have been tested and proven in court. Police have made illegal arrests. Police have acted beyond their powers. And these actions have been undertaken to impose a political curfew - to stifle dissent. Motorcycle clubs might be the first organisations declared under COCA, but who will be next? Occupy? Wikileaks? Lock-The-Gate?

The more disturbing question is how did it even come to this? How did such heinous laws get the support of both major political parties and also the media?

What else are we sleepwalking into?

Submitted by Anon

COCA and Consorting Facts

(not an exhaustive list):

The rules of evidence do not apply

Evidence can be heard in secret, in a closed court.

Facts are decided on the balance of probabilities

Only the Police Commissioner can make an application for a group to be declared criminal.

The accused party does not need to be present at the hearing.

The accused party does not need to be informed directly of the accusation.

The Commissioner can refuse any person from being present at the hearing, including members of the accused organisation.

The eligible Judge can decide an organisation is criminal on the basis of any information suggesting that a link exists between the organisation and serious criminal activity.

A person who participates in a criminal group (as defined above) and directs any activities of that group, without even knowing that the group has been declared criminal and without even committing criminal acts, can face 15years imprisonment.

It is not necessary for the prosecution to prove that an association would have led to the commission of any offence.

Copy-and-pasted laws of the same kind are being rolled out across other states.

The Crown, the Attorney General, the Commissioner and any other persons exercising functions under COCA claim to be immune from civil or criminal liability

Why work ?

Why work for a system that doesn't Work for you ?

Why believe in a system that doesn't believe in you ?

Capitalism is fear
Fear that if we don't own or control everything
Everything will turn on us!

I got news for you, bad things happen whether you own them or not.

One of the greatest things a person can do is let go of their fear, it has a way of controlling you if you do not control it.

Those who hate others mostly hate themselves, like fear, hate must be let go otherwise it poisons the soul.

Submitted by Liam Kesteven

Why The System Isn't Broken

(...But Why We Should Still Want Change)

- by Rohan Best

In the first week Occupy Sydney (OS), that glorious week which saw a mass of people assemble in Martin Place and begin to discuss radical ideas of how we could create a more equitable society, a slogan became one of the main catchphrases of the occupation. "*The System Is Broken – We Want Change!*" Amongst all the anarchists, socialists, environmentalists, hippies, punks, parents, the old and young, those from political parties and the many more who were not politically aligned in any way, this simple phrase united us all (and, depending on who you ask, was one of the only things we could agree on).

But is the system really broken?

Capitalism is designed to be inequitable. Saying that the system is broken when it is inherently designed that way is like wondering why your food is too spicy when the main ingredient is chilli. The system is not broken, in fact, the system is doing very well!

One of the central tenants of *Capitalism* is private ownership of the means of production. It is written into the ideology that a small elite will *own* the money making apparatuses of society and thus will *own* the profits it generates. Those who cannot own a money making business (or cannot be completely removed from the system and live a self-sustaining lifestyle) are forced to sell their labour to those who can. Whether it's manual labour, making coffees, cleaning floors or serving customers, the bulk of the money you generate for whatever business you work for, goes into the pockets of your boss or your company's owner.

The class system inherent in *Capitalism* (i.e. the ruling class who own the means of production and the underclass who must sell their labour to survive) creates a struggle of counterposing forces. As employees, we want to work less hours for more pay. As employers, our bosses want us to work more hours for less pay. This is why those who are promoted to managerial positions are all slave drivers with no social skills. We think they are shit bosses but seen through the eyes of *Capitalism*, they are all well deserving of their promotions. The best bosses are those who can kiss the arses of

those above and kick the arses of those bellow. It is no coincidence then that every boss you've ever had was an arsehole who didn't care about the staff under them. And that one exception, the one who didn't mind if you slacked off or took 20 toilet breaks in a 5 hour shift, that manager will never be promoted above their current level regardless of the respect and admiration they have from other staff. And, if they do happen to *own* the company, capitalist logic dictates that they will soon be driven out of business by more ruthless competitors (who will incidentally be rewarded by society and seen as good, shrewd businessmen despite the misery they have caused).

Bosses and owners must be ruthless and must not care about employees in order to survive. This stems from the other central tenant of *Capitalism*: money is invested in something which generates more money. This is when money becomes capital, an idea which is similar to when you hear “she was able to *capitalise* on the situation”. If your *investment* is larger than your return or profits, your business won't survive in a capitalist society. Staff wages and benefits are of course part of a business's *investments*. So when we see jobs being cut yet record profits being made, we should not say “the system is broken” because this is just a sign of healthy *Capitalism*.

Remember when the local grocery store went out of business because a Coles or Woolworths opened up? Or when your rent was raised even though nothing was done to the place which would actually add value? Or when you could only get casual employment just so your boss could cut your hours or even fire you when business was slow? ← all examples of healthy *Capitalism*.

Social inequities are a healthy manifestation of *Capitalism* and so there is no point in reforming an inherently flawed ideology. Is the system broken? Hell no. Do we want change? Fuck yes!!

Feedback

Thanks for all the articles on GMO crops. (Issue 5)

Also something that has shocked me recently is how much the CSIRO are 'in bed' with Monsanto. http://permaculture.org.au/2011/07/15/csiro-in-bed-with-multinational-corporations/ .

> The corporations listed by Hindmarsh as having direct financial connections with CSIRO include: Agrigenetics, Monsanto, Rhone Poulenc and AgrEvo (later part of Aventis and then Bayer). A collaboration between the CSIRO and Monsanto generated Australia's first major GM commercial crop. On the day of the announcement of the commercial approval for Bayer's GM canola (oilseed rape) in Australia, CSIRO announced that Bayer would be extending its lucrative investment in CSIRO 'to develop modern biotechnology tools applicable to cotton and other crops'. The press release said, ' For Bayer CropScience, the alliance with CSIRO is regarded as a model for global cooperation.'

As the article shows GMO food is being pushed through by the biotech tech corporations but using CSIRO as an umbrella organization. The Australia public have trust in CSIRO so this is a very manipulative agenda. Australia is the first place in the world earmarked to commercially grow GM Wheat. When CSIRO board agreed to do this there were two people on the board that worked for Nufarm, a distributor for Monsanto. This is stated in this article: http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/48234

> The raid was conducted in relation to an "alleged trespass and property damage" on July 14, when Greenpeace activists in Hazmat suits used whipper-snippers to destroy a CSIRO trial of genetically modified (GM) wheat being grown in Canberra's north.
>
> Greenpeace claimed that the wheat was planned for secret human trials and had already caused allergic reactions in mice.
>
> The CSIRO said the wheat was not transgenic (that is, it had no genes transferred from another species). It said the wheat genes had been slightly modified to lower the glycaemic index and increase fibre to improve bowel health and nutritional value.
>
> Greenpeace also accused the CSIRO of a conflict of interest because two directors of Nufarm — the exclusive distributor for biotech giant Monsanto in Australia — sat on the CSIRO board when the wheat trial was approved.

Submitted by Nicky

2GB reject right of reply from Occupy Sydney

Posted by Katie from OccupySydney.org.au

2GB Ray Hadley Show segment "Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner & Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione on Occupy Participant found Not Guilty by Court."

(http://podcasts.mrn.com.au.s3.amazonaws.com/rayhadley/20120518-occupy2.mp3)

In relation to the above mentioned case, Occupy Sydney wishes to highlight a grave misrepresentation of Facts by The Ray Hadley Show and the featured participants on a mainstream Radio Station with considerable influence in some community demographics.

Last Friday Ray Hadley featured a story based on the Thursday Court appearance of Lance Priestley, an occupy Sydney participant. Lance was found not guilty of "staying overnight" x 2 charges and "intimidate police" x 1 charge, with all charges arising from his participation in the Occupy Sydney movement.

The case involved an evidential hearing with multiple Police witnesses and the defendant choosing to give evidence alone for the defence. The Judge ruled in favour of the defendant as much on the basis of the evidence submitted by police as that submitted by the defendant.

The Ray Hadley Show host Mr Hadley and his guests Messrs Scipione and Stoner relied on the Police "Fact Sheets" (a summary document outlining the brief case put by police. The Fact sheet does not contain even the full Police Evidence offered, let alone the defence arguments. A full transcript of the evidential hearing presenting the full body of evidence upon which the case was decided is available from The Downing Centre Court Registrar.

The Ray Hadley Show made no attempt to give balance to what was in effect a skewed advertorial for the Politically motivated desires of the Assistant Premier and the operational playing field sought by the Police Commissioner. Requests for a right of reply by Occupy Sydney and the defendant directly to the show producer have been ignored.

The Assistant Premier's comments, made without reference to the full facts, draw attention to the need to continue to maintain separation between the Judicial Policing and Political aspects of Government . One might take the view that the Deputy Premier and Police Commissioner seek in making their public statements to in some way influence future Judicial interpretations of law. If this is the case it amounts to an attempt to pervert the course of justice or a contempt of court rather than enhancement of the law.

The Assistant Commissioners Statements taken in their entirety amount to an unwarranted and expedient partisan attack on the character, ability, and impartiality of the magistrate who heard the case. As with Occupy Sydney, the defendant, and her honour or appropriate representatives have not been given the opportunity to reply.

Media contacts:

Vicki Smart 0447 842 547 / Defendant in above case contactable on 0410 722 000

Occupy's empty bonnet...or basket...

I almost cried the first time the Police-bots stomped through the occupation. The soil left on the ground was the mascara that my tears smeared. They had demolished the garden. We were left with our occupation no more.

But the occupation returned, and the plants, and we continued to dream a better future. The resurrected occupation didn´t have a continuous kitchen but it did have a basket. A basket full of fruit.

Now, however, the weather is cool and the benches quiet. The poor fruit basket is empty.

I think about throwing it out.

But I pause.

I might get more fruit one day.

I huff, ´and I thought about throwing it out!´

The basket sits at present on my floor. I ridicule the choice as I constantly run into it. This basket, empty to the centre. Why should I bother myself when all I do is walk past it?

I hope I get more fruit one day!

I decide to sit down before the basket. It´s there, so I am, here: we´re..

I almost see a hole at the bottom. It´s a closed centre. If it weren´t, it´d be something else, a poor funnel, a hat. Pieces of basket turn around this centre and move outwards. But the basket looks so empty and my gaze needs something to hold...

And I have to stop thinking that I´ll buy fruit some day...

Something stirred. We all know that feeling at Occupy. I don´t believe the basket´s empty. This one might contain water for birds to drink, or an empty gaze (searching to understand what it sees). It might be the whirling night of Van Gogh. Or it might hold odd scraps of paper, chores I´m reluctant to do! Perhaps there´ll be a mighty message or moment of action.

I have to stop looking at it some time, but not without these thoughts. The basket could have held many things. At Occupy, it was hardly noticeable given the library. But like the garden, the books were swept away. We can´t conjure any of those things back but we can invent this gaze and ask, ¨what does this basket, Occupy´s bonnet, now hold?

From the Lunar Poets Society...

Submitted by Pathi

Occupy: an existential scenario

It was one small step but the effect was extraordinary. A huge noise sparked my senses. I felt a vacuum of wind blow in a tunnel. A drill-like static. I could hear the sound of bricks falling hollow to the ground. A slamming of the door. Silence. I had only taken one small step.

I found myself occupying the steps. It was October 15th, 2011.

I should have taken the lift, I thought. My climb was slow, my ears confused. All was still, like night. It was mid-afternoon.

The sun and wind did what they do, shine and blow, but everything felt irregular. I looked about for the crowd arching their hands or placards over their eyes. They couldn´t see. I couldn´t see them. No children bathed in the fountains, nobody juggled balls. There was no music in the air, no chanting, no Spanish bagpipes. My radar set for the spot where people threw paper airplanes down the stairs towards the station lift. The concrete was empty, the planes grounded elsewhere. That step was irreversible, but I realised that I should have taken the lift.

I alone occupied a tiny place of history. Like before. A history that said nothing about what we now know. This place was just Martin place. The day was just Saturday.

I needed something to bring me out of my reverie. I dunked my head in the fountain. The cold water made everything seem clear. There was a buzz again, I listened. But he wasn´t there, his voice, you know it. You can´t miss his scream, Pat´s dream. Sudden, like Occupy. Suddenly being.

I turned to descend the stairs. It seemed pointless to be in a place that never was. Occupy Sydney had never existed. It was a rude jolt and months flew out like cheap change.

Summer. Autumn. Winter. Days of flyers fluttering in the wind. Held down by wire or plastic, picked at by earnest travellers or the breeze. Why did we do it? Cardboard creatures and towers. A spontaneous pooling of energy, an energy gone, poof! One jolt and I didn´t feel like getting off the floor.

This thing had never existed. No nights being engaged by the constant hammering of pedestrian lights. The patter of feet towards the 7-eleven, the sliding of a yoga mat, the absent yogi, the sleepy eyes at 5 am. The cold wind. Summer. Autumn. Winter. Being engaged totally by something others saw as flawed.

No, I only had this question: If Occupy Sydney didn´t exist, then it would be worse because...

Each of us understands what would follow. Our placards demanded the end of capitalism or a greater love for all (a little less for the bankers), but maybe we really came together to build a community where we could say to each other, you can do it, go ahead if you want! That was it. Do it. Do it and don´t let up! Through all the months. But, really, what *would* happen if Occupy Sydney didn´t exist? What would be the scenario we´d face?

Pathi

Thejtronfiles(at)yahoo.com.au

The building blocks of FREEDOM: It´s inside you now!

Freedom. It´s a powerful word. Enough to move you, to fill you, to run through your veins. Right now. We live our lives never really seeing the blood as it moves through us but we´re sure it´s red. What other colour could it be? But freedom, you can´t paint it. Yet, most of us are sure that this word Freedom makes us tick, makes us move, makes us reach. Somewhere. We read it now, again. We juggle all the time with its meaning, for us, for others. We juggle F E D E R M O and the letters fall down. We have to come together to put the word back together again.

Sharing our ideas and perspective is itself a free act, if only because it makes us lunge towards the blurry murkiness of the ticking inside us. We give freedom form by giving it words, images and gestures; on Saturday at Occupy Free School, amongst the breeze and buses, we released those words into the air. We guessed what Freedom meant for us.

R E F D O M E

Freedom corresponds to the individual and the society. For us, it´s determined by the opportunities we have to colour our experiences and to choose, for example, to take the path less travelled or to take the normal one (making it fit for the travel of others). Freedom means a lot more personally for each of you, there´s a lot of blood in our bodies, but something we find in common is the capacity for our personal independence to restrict or oppress others. The need to be together at some point in time brings us into a tricky transfusion and at points, things get messy. Society, with its traditions, borders and mediated communication, only enlarges the mess until there´s only one way to keep things clean: to put everyone in a hygienic robe and to keep things controlled and manipulated.

E D M R F O E

Participants at the workshop believed Freedom was neither ours nor society´s to keep. The two entities came together in our agreement that we had a responsibility to share our social spaces and resources and that this responsibility was better upheld when it came from within, through our veins, when it wasn´t something fed into us from some other power.

F R E M O E D

Freedom happens a lot before we act to change the world. We see the world in a particular way, and in every moment, we make choices to give that world a particular face. But just as we assume and perceive and uphold our beliefs and choices, so do those external factors play with us. The lights and noises affect our judgement, even at Martin Place, and many of us have had to fight the authorities just because a few signs have been laid in concrete. How many signs are there around the city? Around you right now? Part of the act of becoming free seems to be to become aware of this very relationship, between you, your blood, your ideas, and those ideas, the blood coursing outside you, in others, in a city, a country, where many things tell you what to say.

R E E D O M F

Awareness doesn´t change the world, completely. But nobody ever argued that becoming aware in itself was enough. Action has always been there. It´s just implied. We need more than quiet souls. But we need to be aware that we are living, with blood running inside us, right now. To feel it is to know that we have the right and the choice, to give it form, and colour and reach. Somewhere.

Everybody left with their own conclusions about what had to happen once you became aware. We´re all responsible for making ourselves freer day to day. Does that mean we occupy at Martin Place or meditate inside ourselves? Or do we dance down Pitt street? Or, perhaps, we build giant letters out of blocks and leave them somewhere in the city. Letters to be played with. Letters to spell the word F R E E D O M.

Submitted by Pathi

Reportback from the Occupy Sydney Podcast Working Group

In the latest episode of the Occupy Sydney podcast, we take a look at the conflict fuelled by the trade in resources. Here are some of the issues;

- Ivan Glasenberg, CEO of Glencore and The Richest Man in Australia profits from Child Labour in DR Congo
- George Forrest International destroyed Kawama village in DR Congo with complete impunity in 2009. Houses were bulldozed while people slept in them. A 10-year-old boy had leg crushed under rubble; family couldn't afford medical treatment.
- Australia continues to fund Indonesian special forces troops who are torturing, murdering and terrorizing peaceful activists in West Papua
- American, Belgian and British governments plotted and carried out assassination of democratically elected Prime Minister of DR Congo Patrice Lumumba in 1961.
- Indonesian Military receives only 20% of funding from the state. The remainder is raised privately. Military officers own timber concessions and often participate directly in resource extraction.
- Australian SAS troops are in Africa. Until recently this was secret.
- There have been reports of Australian forces in West Papua (unverified)
- Australian Mercenaries have been employed to provide security to mining companies in West Papua
- Foreign workers with military training have been employed in mines in DR Congo. These workers can, and have, fought locals.
- Atrocities that benefit the interests of extractive companies are being committed daily – nothing much changed since Conrad saw the horrors of Leopold's Congo Free State and wrote "Heart of Darkness"

Part 2 will look at the environmental damage caused by the extractive industries.

Part 3 will look at the corruption and deception around mining deals, government and politics.

We could only cover a small fraction of the issues around this topic; please visit osydpodcast.org for more information and links.

Occupy Sydney

osydpodcast.org

Occupy Sydney Podcast Episode 2: Robbery with Violence – resource exploitation series pt 1 of 3

Link to Audio

Submitted by Hugo

Are you able to donate to the Legals Fund

to assist people with court costs and fines out of their participation in a global movement against the current economic system?

Want the latest Occupy Sydney legal news?
Download the Legal Tribune

http://www.scribd.com/doc/97093128

Consider donating to the Legals Fund:
G Romuld
BSB 802396
Account number 26411222
>>> Please put "Occupy" in the transfer heading

Thank you for supporting Occupy Sydney!
www.occupysydney.org.au
OS Legal Support on facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/343057322380372/

Email: legal@occupysydney.org.au

A big thank you to everyone that helped out with the Legals fundraiser on Saturday

Submitted by Wenny

The OCCUPY Content Management System (OCMS) @ occupytheuniverse.net

Learn

Education is a powerful tool for altering human belief systems and thus behaviour. It requires an organised system of information delivery and mechanisms whereby participation in the resultant evolving communities is facilitated. Comprehensive introduction to a variety of subjects is provided.

Occupy

In depth content covers the philosophy, structure, and activities of OCCUPY. For example, one significant role is, “the facilitation of community building through education”.

Interact

OCCUPY facilitates the creation of new ways of doing things and new ways of being responsible for the wellbeing and sustainability of both local and global communities. This is not easily done in isolation, but rather, gathers strength through interaction with others. It is a process that empowers each participant through the discovery that similar concerns are shared world-wide throughout many different communities.

Discuss

Participation in learning and interaction develops community identity. Through discussion, proposals for action can be clarified and activities understood.

Collaborate

Identification of problems through participation in learning, interaction, and discussion, leads to the generation of proposals for solutions. Solutions take the form of consensus driven collaborations that can evolve into real-world actions.

The OCCUPY Content Management System (OCMS)

The Occupy Workflow Paradigm

An important feature of the Occupy Content Management System is the Occupy workflow paradigm. The workflow concept provides a simple but powerful organising principle for the educational experience evoked by participation in the conversation referred to as 'Occupy', the underlying organisational infrastructure, and the construction and use of the Occupy Content Management System (OCMS).

An Occupy Workflow

The notion of 'workflow' arises from participation in Occupy. It is identified from Occupy activities related to community building and outreach projects. Visualised in Figure 1, the workflow may currently be summarised by the following five activities:

Learn, Occupy, Interact, Discuss, Collaborate

These activities are not necessarily sequential in their relationships, neither is any workflow they form necessarily linear. Rather, as indicated in Figure 1, the primary functional relationships are recursive.

To maximize the experience of participation, each activity should be 'occupied' for some period of time. It is through meaningful participation in the conversation that is 'Occupy' that a clearer understanding of these activities and their functions emerge.

It becomes apparent, for example, that the symmetry of dichotomous notions such as, "The means justify the ends . . ." and "The ends justify the means . . ." may break in the presence of more elegant complementarity. "The means are the ends . . ." and "The ends are the means . . .", where 'ends' and 'means' are one and the same, being distinguished only by their location within a defined process. It is under such conditions that symmetry breaking and synthesis can drive evolution.

A New Paradigm

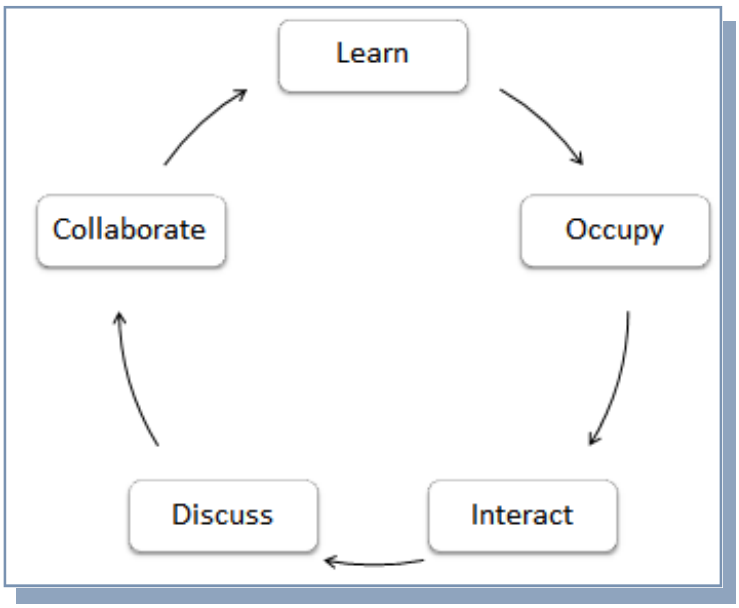

Figure 1: Occupy Workflow: The Occupy workflow is composed of five steps or categories: Learn, Occupy, Interact, Discuss, and Collaborate. They need not be traversed sequentially. However, it is recommended that some time is spent participating in each activity to obtain a clearer understanding of Occupy.

Occupy is not about changes to a broken system so as to 'fix' it. Rather, it is concerned with the creation of new cognitive models of the world and the place of humans and their interactions within that world. Given current global circumstances, an increasing requirement for equitable and sustainable implementation of solutions has the capacity to drive adaptive change in behaviourally significant aspects of human belief systems.

The Role of Learning

Education is a powerful tool for altering human belief systems and thus behaviour. Education requires an organised system of information delivery and mechanisms whereby participation in the resultant evolving communities is facilitated.

The Role of Occupy

Following the inception of Occupy Sydney, three working groups were formed, Facilitation, Media, and Outreach. The activities of these groups can be characterised as functions of 'facilitation' and 'education'. This suggests a significant initial role for Occupy is, "the facilitation of community building through education".

The Role of Interaction

Occupy facilitates the creation of new ways of doing things and new ways of being responsible for the wellbeing and sustainability of both local and global communities. This is not easily done in isolation, but rather, gathers strength through interaction with others. It is a process that empowers each individual through the discovery that similar concerns are shared throughout many different communities.

The Role of Discussion

Participation in learning, information sharing conversations between individuals, and discussion within groups, consolidates community identity. Through discussion, proposals for action can be clarified and activities understood.

The Role of Collaboration

Identification of problems through participating in learning, interaction, and discussion leads to the generation of proposals for solutions. Solutions take the form of consensus driven collaborations that can evolve into real-world actions.

An Information Portal

An "information portal" should neither by necessity nor definition reflect pre-existing hierarchical structures. However, it should at least protect from the repetition of historically inadvertent adventures such as, for example, the trajectory that has delivered us here.

Can an electronic content management system modelling complex systems be defined from the requirements of participants in a real system? An answer is given in part by occupysydney.org.au. There, content reflecting the role of Occupy in the facilitation of education and community building is linked from the Occupy home page through the Calendar, Forums, Google Groups, and Wiki.

Portal Integration

A comprehensive browser-based information portal could be composed of five parallel entry points into an underlying content management system.

Submitted by Alan

The NAB vs The Farmers

– Update June 2012

July 1st, 2012 · Katie

The last few months have seen a few changes in the court case against the 3rd generation farming family from Walgett.

* Notices of Possession against their property were placed in trees on a public road, without even an envelope with their name/address etc. Just paperwork shoved into trees. Even though their letterbox was only 20m down the road, and very obvious.. These documents show *exactly* how much this family owes, plus all their personal details etc

* The Office of Indigenous affairs rejected the proposal, loosing one less opportunity for them, and a countless opportunities for the local Indigenous community.

* I travelled out to see them, to record details and to learn how it feels to live in one of the most isolated area's of New South Wales.

Video: The Farmers vs The Bank

http://youtu.be/400RBOgAacs

This video is such a small part of what they are going through, and the despicable tricks they are being forced to contend with. In the coming days, more information will come to hand, and we will keep you updated.

If you missed the beginning of this story, read on :

NAB treats 3rd generation farmers like 2nd rate citizens, whilst supporting "2012 – Year of the Farmer" – Update

April 10th, 2012 · Katie ·

It all started with a request for my email address from a good friend who lives out in Dubbo. Said he had information for me about a local family that was being screwed by the NAB. A few hours later, 5 emails came

Continued ...

through, and one by one described the awful situation that a brother and sister were facing.

Claire and her brother Chris are 3rd generation farmers, on a property that has been in their families hands for over 100 years. Their property is a mix of cattle, wheat and cotton farming, surrounded by pristine nature, and bordered by the Macquarie and Barwon rivers, in the North West of NSW. This is their home. Now all of this is about to taken away from them. Surviving 9 years of drought, this is a family who couldn't be destroyed by Mother Nature's worst but now they find themselves about to be evicted by parasitic, immoral, impatient bankers from National Australia Bank.

In a time where most loans are around the 7-12% mark, NAB has made millions from the percentage gap on what we pay, compared to what they pay for the money – especially in this post GFC world, whereby banks can practically steal the money from the Reserve Bank, both here and the US Federal Reserve.

Yet, the opportunity to make even more money is always so very temping, and thus when the farmers came to them to assist, and at a time where there was the best opportunity to trade out of debt came from the sky in early 2010, when the Boxing Day 2009 rains finally broke the drought, they couldn't help but take full advantage of the situation.

The rains gave these farmers, who provide our entire state with food, who have been struggling for so many years, an incredible climatic opportunity to address the debt bought about by nine years of drought. But the NAB told them to sell the farms without a crop in the ground or deal with the default rate of their 18% interest loan as they refused to advance anymore finance to grow crops when the drought broke 18%! Most credit cards aren't that high these days. And this is after 9 years of drought, and a flood.

Because Claire and Chris refused to sell up before taking advantage of the best

agribusiness

nab it.

season to trade out of debt, they went ahead and sowed the 2010 wheat crop. They were then served with Farm Debt Mediation that forced unreasonable obligations on them that did not take into consideration a Natural Disaster, because of this they breached their Farm Debt Mediation agreement (one clause being to repay $1million to the NAB by January 2011 based on the 2010 wheat crop). With help from local people they got by, and managed to not have to sell the farm in early 2010, they sowed the 2010 wheat crop which proved their viability by growing an 18,000 tonne (about $5million) wheat crop only to see it destroyed by the November 2010 floods.

If the NAB had assisted them to use the abundance of water that had returned to the Macquarie river because of the incredible season in 2010 they would have been able to use this income to make up for the loss of the 2010 wheat crop, however the NAB refused to maintain the farms, and in the same year the NAB assisted Cubby Station to grow cotton when it was in administration. At the time the NAB called in Chris and Claire's loan. They were told they had 49% equity but it was of no use to them as they could not get finance to continue to grow crops. Refinancing was made impossible because it appears that once the NAB eliminates you and Farm Debt Mediation is served, other financiers are reluctant to assist, especially when credit was near impossible due to the GFC.

They were never in the financial crisis Cubby Station was in, yet they were crucified and blocked by the NAB of having any hope of running the land profitably as the NAB did for Cubby Station in 2010.

More take, less give.

All options are being investigated to fix this situation, reluctantly they put the farms up for sale by auction on November 17, 2011 to show the NAB they had tried, they failed to sell and now the NAB are seeking possession. Usually a farmer is given the chance to sell again in six months and keep the farms running and using every environmental opportunity possible to bring income in until it is sold satisfactorily, but not in this case. Investors have been and are being sought; a community and equity partnership with the Aboriginal

Continued ...

Community of Brewarrina and Walgett was very well received by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (who is conducting a feasibility study) and the NAB initially.

Cameron Clyne is the NAB CEO who is at the forefront of NAB Reconciliation Action Plan, and Glenn Brennan NAB Indigenous Affairs Manager, however, both seem to be full of talk and no action. This isn't about not wanting to pay the money back. This is about being a farmer at the mercy of Mother Nature, and now of this prestitute bank, ironically being a main supporter of "2012 – Australian Year of the Farmer", and making over $1.4billion profit in Q2 (Oct-Dec 2011) + record profits in 2011 – is unable to wait for the study to be completed (End April) and has given an earliest date of eviction of the 12th April.

The NAB has shown their determination in this matter, without a thought for the big picture. To not even wait 12 months for a full cycle of growth. To not even wait while the head of the family, their father, Gordon Priestley lay dying in hospital whilst they were also isolated again in the February 2012 floods. The NAB were requested twice to defer the Supreme Court proceedings as it was impossible for Chris and Claire to file a defence due to Chris being isolated on the farm due to the floods and Claire caring for her father in Dubbo and then Brewarrina Hospital where he passed away on February 19, 2012. They were also told that the DEEWR feasibility study into their Aboriginal proposal needed time to be completed by end of April, but they were told that the debt is out of control and the interest is accumulating too much and that Aboriginal projects take too much time, however they did not mention that the NAB are in a partnership with Indigenous Business Australia the main funding body for such projects..

And so while the NAB continued its relentless pursuit, they left their father in hospital to meet with a solicitor to see if he would represent them on February 20. Their father passed away while they were trying to get legal help, yet bravely, only the next day they attended court in Sydney where the Louis-Vuitton clad lawyer for NAB still showed no mercy, all the while her high-end labels cloaking the heartless corporation that lives beneath and clocking up legal fees Chris and Claire

Priestley will have to pay. In addition to this, they have been trying to get Centrelink to assist them for living costs as when they asked the NAB for living money when their father was dying they were refused and told that the NAB had already been good to them.

This bank who promotes itself as "More Give, Less Take" is its own antithesis of what it promotes.

It's time to truly understand and appreciate the integral work that our farmers do, and the challenges they face. The NAB claims this family has broken their contract, yet at the same time, the NAB is blatantly breaching the Banking Code of Conduct.

OccupySydney supports the family, and will be soon holding an action directed at NAB, plus court solidarity for this family against the merciless, heartless, relentless pursuit of the almighty dollar at the expense of the independent farming families of Australia. We welcome you all to join us, to show that people can make a difference when we work towards a common goal. Stay tuned for specifics

Katie Sheppard for occupysydney.org.au

UPDATE – May 2012: Claire and Chris have made 3 additional trips to Sydney in the last month, in order to meet with solicitors, and barristers – however, the bank will not let up, and possession of their property is seeming imminent. They have one more option available to them within the current court proceedings, which could occur as quickly as 7 days away. Although, the sooner the proceedings, the sooner the possession could take place if they find themselves unsuccessful.

Add to this, the fact that even though Centrelink assistance was applied for in February, they are yet to receive any financial help from the very Government Department that is meant to help Aussies in their time of need. And with each drive to/from Sydney, they are spending money that they just don't have.

Please share this information around, we are trying to raise more awareness of their plight, as they are one of thousands of farming families facing corrupt banks, loss of their family properties and potential homelessness.

To outline the context of this letter, I am on a campaign to stop advertising campaigns in our schools. I wrote an open letter response to some pro-Coles parents at my children's preschool who had left me a large document to outline how much Coles had given the community. This was my response:

Thank you for your research into Coles. But, you need to remember that Wesfarmers (Owner of Coles) is all about the bottom line or profit. When a company gives to a community it is for advertising purposes. The Coles Sports for School is cheap advertising for them. Coles are paying us in sweatshop produced, cost price, sport goods that they value at full RRP for priceless billboard advertising on our school gates and in our school classrooms. We are also being advertised when school ask for or when we count the vouchers. As a parent, I would like to have a say in what my child is subject to within a learning environment.

We must remember, that this is a very clever market poly by the supermarkets to be endorsed by the schools. We are getting a bad deal.

Why I am I aggravated by the Coles Sports Vouchers? Where do I start? I send my oldest child to a primary school in Sydney, and my child had told me about her class counting vouchers in lessons, then to add insult to injury the parents were asked in for two hours on a Saturday morning to process vouchers? My time on a Saturday with my children is worth more than a few cheap books or soccer balls.

Let’s put this in perspective… Do you think the military have a bake sale to get new missiles for their boats, why is our education being sold to advertisers? How long before Coke and MacDonald’s are advertising in our schools? Oh hang on… MacDonald’s have already advertised in our schools… so now can we sue them for our kids being fat?

Coles and Woolworths Duopoly

FACTS

- Coles and Woolworths have 80% of ALL the supermarket sales. This is one of the biggest duopoly concentrations of grocery markets in the world.

- In 2010 alone Coles/Woolies took home $94.3billion of the $242billion spent in all shops.

- Coles in 2011 generated $1.6 billion in profit. They back give PEANUTS to the community; they are wiping out our farmers, and our milk industry. When they are done destroying farming they will turn all our farmland into mines. Oh yes! Wesfarmer is a mining company too. And we will be buying our produce from god knows where? if we can afford it.

- Lets talk about the monetary exchange in this advertising offer, in the 2011 'Coles Sports for Schools' program, for a school to get a Spalding TF-150 basketball, which retails for $19.95 in Australian stores, requires 280 points, or a total spend of $2800. This equates to 18.5 families doing a $150 weekly shop, or 14 families doing a large $200 weekly shop, or 28 families doing a small weekly shop. BAD DEAL!

As parents all we are trying to do is to create an alternative to corporate companies advertising in our schools. These companies are taking us for Fools!

THANKS FOR TAKING TIME TO READ ABOUT ADVERTISING TO OUR KIDS.

'Concerned Parent and Occupier'

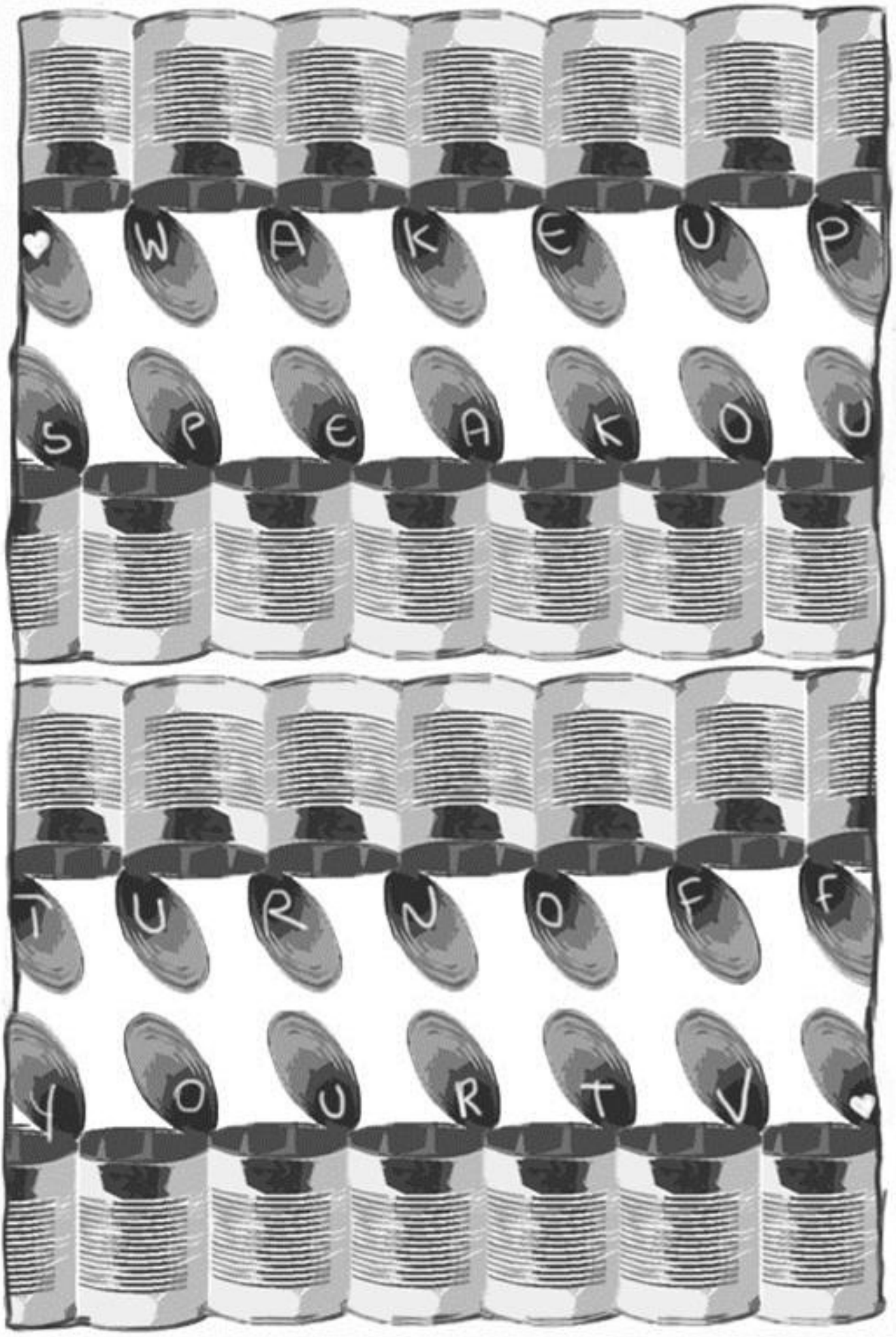

Image by Maloë Cadic